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chapters devoted to individual 'second-tier' ports. The chapters are divided rather mechanically into sub-sections on, for example, institutions, trade, port evolution, populations, urban expansion, forelands and hinterlands, imports and exports. The primary aim is to examine 'the evolution of metropole port settlements, the relationships between their forms, their changing functions and their shifting social configurations'. O'Flanagan's main argument is that the monopoly policies which gave certain ports exclusive trading rights 'made and undid them' (p. 4). While the metropolises made financial gains during the monopoly period, they failed to develop a diverse economic base, and became overly dependent on colonial trade. *Port Cities* draws on an impressive array of statistics and local historical literature. What is disappointing is the lack of attention to human agency and historical contingencies. This is very much a structural economic history; the parts played by individual policy-makers and their decisions are not accounted for. Given the large number of centres being considered, some division by region rather than historical theme is necessary. Nevertheless, I would have preferred a substantial portion besides the conclusion to foreground critical questions, thus making fuller use of the great mass of evidence that O'Flanagan clearly has at his disposal. Why, for instance, did the Spanish metropolises fail to develop efficient financial systems? Can the study of port cities shed light on economic decline, a concept that has traditionally been hitched to Spain, particularly in anglophone historiography? Had such questions been addressed, this book would have the potential to attract wider scholarly audiences. Nevertheless, it will be of interest to urban, Iberian and economic historians, and offers valuable material for Atlantic historians.

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**Aurora Savelli**, *Siena. Il popolo e le contrade (XVI–XX secolo)*. Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2008, xxx + 534pp. 49 colour plate insert. Documentary appendix and bibliography. €58.00.  
doi:10.1017/S0963926810000428

Siena is famed as the city of the *palio*, a break-neck horse race run by bareback riders over three laps of the magnificent shell-shaped piazza del Campo, twice a year during the summer months. The *palio* has been extensively studied by scholars of varied disciplines, but the social structures that give shape to that small city's fierce internal rivalries, articulated around seventeen districts or *contrade*, has not previously received much attention beyond local studies. For the same internal rivalries that manifest in the horse race have also given rise to a vast local production of studies of the individual *contrade*, whose scholarly value is varied, and whose accessibility outside of Siena itself is at most patchy.

Aurora Savelli's volume sets out to provide a scholarly study of the *contrada*, identifying the historical origins of this neighbourhood or district sodality and tracing its development down to modern times, a longue durée project that spans half a millennium. By so doing, the author sets out to identify continuities and major changes in the social makeup and institutional standing of the *contrade* within the city's administration. While this is a legitimate aim, it is nonetheless also true to say that this is only partially achieved. One problem stems from the

chosen chronological sweep: the real meat of the book deals with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (chapters 3–5 and appendix documents), and here the author argues convincingly for the initial emergence of the *contrada* from among the artisanal classes and the subsequent widening inclusion to the nobility, invited in as ‘protectors’ of these associations. However, in the final section of the book, which looks at the *contrada* phenomenon within the context of the ‘invention of tradition’ thesis (as influentially developed by Hobsbawm and Ranger) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its medieval origins are subjected to scrutiny. Savelli strenuously argues that the search for such origins rests largely upon the ideologically motivated misunderstanding of the *contrada* as having its roots in the civic militias of Siena’s golden age, and the equation made between martial civic participation and independent republican rule, what has sometimes been called Siena’s ‘gothic dream’. Yet to overlook any continuities and origins for the *contrada* before the city’s loss of independence in 1555, as Savelli does in chapter 2, seems rather to lose sight of the elements of continuity that lie at the basis of book’s aims, and the success of the *contrada* as an institution. While there is rarely a direct overlap between the territorial boundaries of the *contrade* with parishes, nor even with the late medieval fiscal and administrative *compagnie* (which are barely even mentioned), it is nevertheless true that it was around churches and from within these *compagnie* that the first signs of artisanal sodality emerged. Careful archival work on these continuities, from the later fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries will surely throw up interesting findings, as has been shown with the emergence of the *potenze* in Florence in this same period, for example. Furthermore, while parishes and *compagnie* may not provide the direct origins for the *contrade*, the latter’s spatial and territorial expression, as well as the increasing regulation of their administrative hierarchies, owe much to these precedents. It is indeed a great pity that the author has not really addressed the territorial expression of the *contrade*, an aspect which is key to the essence of their identity and competitiveness. The modern city is thickly layered with visible signs that denote their borders and boundaries, in the form of majolica tiles, flags, decorated lamps and so on; though it may be difficult to trace these boundaries back in time with precision, discussion of border disputes and conflicts would help to illustrate the physical and geographic expression of these local community groupings (there are no maps in the book).

*Siena. Il popolo e le contrade* assembles an impressive array of evidence, and brings the discussion of this out of the exclusive confines of locally produced and consumed volumes of *contrada* history, although some of the assumptions of local scholarship remain. As mentioned above, the major focus of primary research and of the documentary appendix centres on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and perhaps in transforming the original Ph.D. thesis into a book, a decision might have been taken to publish this material alone, leaving the post-1800 considerations for another. Savelli publishes some of the earliest *contrada* statutes (1663 and following), and in the body of the text provides useful individual biographical studies and collective prosopographic analysis that document changing *contrada* memberships. Unquestionably an urban phenomenon, whose success was rooted in Siena’s ambiguous status after its annexation to the Medici Grand duchy, the changing role and definition of the *contrade* within Siena would seem to trace that city’s relations with outside powers. It is to be hoped that Savelli’s study will make it easier for historians to see behind the layers of

local myth-making, to assess the *contrade* within the broader context of district government, religious confraternal associations, lay artisan brotherhoods and other means by which urban communities have collectively expressed local group identity.

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**Nelida Fuccaro**, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 276pp. 21 black and white illustrations. 5 maps. £55.00.  
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Fuccaro's *City and State* is the best single-volume history on urban development in the Persian Gulf. Focusing on the city of Manama, once the seat of the British political residency and now the capital of the tiny island kingdom of Bahrain, the book brings to life the decisions, policies and challenges the city faced over the centuries. The first chapter takes the reader back in time, considering the earliest examples of urbanization in Manama which, for the most part, were also the earliest examples of urbanization on the Arabian peninsula. Drawing on an extensive survey of the literature, including the noted gazetteers of the Gulf and the numerous travel diaries recorded by British travellers and administrators, these pages bring to life the hustle and bustle of an emerging Arabian metropolis. Particularly colourful are the insights provided by the interviewees, which have been perfectly interwoven into the text by Fuccaro.

The second chapter sets the scene for Manama's twentieth-century development by placing Bahrain and its urbanization in the broader context of other emerging cities on the peninsula including, most notably, the nearby city of Kuwait. A range of challenges and pressures are considered, including the Ottoman influence and the spread of Wahhabism, both of which greatly impacted on the societies, lifestyles and even architecture of Gulf towns. Particularly enlightening is the discussion of the Manama elite's relative cosmopolitanism: as a key trading hub we learn that its wealthy merchant class were just as comfortable speaking English, Hindi and Farsi as they were at conversing in their native *khaleeji* Arabic. This closely mirrors the merchant elite of the Gulf's other booming merchant city of Dubai, and allows the reader to contrast Manama and Dubai with the other, less urbanized population centres on the peninsula such as Doha and Abu Dhabi. The third and fourth chapters of the book are undoubtedly invaluable for students and scholars of municipal development and urban geography. The reader is carefully guided through the ordering of community in Manama and, perhaps of greatest fascination, the introduction of basic law and order services to the expanding city. We learn, for example, of the British expatriate Charles Belgrave who became a key advisor to the ruling family and helped to set up the first Bahrain police force in 1940. He also served as the chief financial officer of the ruler and as an all-round *éminence grise*, and – significantly perhaps – fell out of favour with the British residency given his perceived closeness to the ruling family.

The final chapters, as readable and engrossing as the historical background, provide an equally fascinating insight into modern Manama as the city's